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It is not improbable that Bernhardt will revisit us before the season is over.

Ristori will come to us from Italy, and so will Salvini, who greatly prefers this country to England, where everybody praises him and nobody pays to see him act.

Germany will spare us Herr Sonnenthal, her greatest living tragedian; Janisch, the favorite comedienne of Vienna, who has learned English, and objects to being advertised as a countess; and a complete troupe for the Wagner operas.

All our own stars, except Modjeska, will shine as usual and, I hope, will patriotically defy foreign competition by putting on additional lustre. When, for example, such actresses as Ristori, Janisch, and Aimée acquire the difficult English language and venture to challenge our actresses upon the New York stage, it is time for the genius of America to assert herself, if ever. From our actresses we may expect much; but the experiences of last season do not inspire us with high hopes as to our actors, who sulked or withdrew when Irving was at his best, and, in sporting phrase, did not even give us a race for our money.

In addition to the native and foreign stars, we are to have all the new plays which are delighting London and are in preparation to delight Paris. Among these is "Nita's First," which has been accepted at Wallack's; a drama upon which Sardou is still at work; a comedy by Meilhac; an opera, written to an English libretto, by Audran, and a melodrama by the authors of "The Silver King."

The menu for the dramatic feast of 1884-85 begins with the humble clam of "Distrust" and the thin sauterne of "Caprice," but look over the list and see what roasts, what game, what pastry, what sweets, and what glorious vintages of Burgundy and Champagne are in reserve!

STEPHEN FISKE.

BOSTON CORRESPONDENCE.

GIFTS TO THE MUSEUM—THE PARKER BEQUEST—A RISING PROVIDENCE ARTIST—DAVID NEAL.

BOSTON, August 5, 1884.

SINCE Mr. W. J. Stillman, writing in *The Nation*, holds up the Boston Museum of Fine Arts as the model for all municipalities contemplating the creation of such institutions, its fortunes become a matter of wide concern. These fortunes have not been greatly different of late from those of all other interests. The Museum has seen hard times, like everything and everybody else. But in the midst of this gloomy period two broad streaks of sunshine have suddenly fallen upon it. These are, first, the gift of a great landscape—great both in surface of canvas and in quality of painting—and the windfall in the will of the late Harvey D. Parker, founder and millionaire proprietor of the famous hostelry—in whose basement Artemus Ward said Harvard University was located—that bears his name. The gift of the painting was as unexpected as the legacy of \$100,000. The giver has never been generally known as a patron of art; he is not, in a word, one of the wealthy men of Boston to whom the Museum has been looking, thus far largely in vain, for rich presents from their noted collections. It is a young lawyer of comparatively moderate accumulations who has set the example for the better known collectors to follow. His manner of giving it was as modest as himself. He saw the lofty canvas at the store of the dealer who imported it, and at once decided that it ought to go to the Art Museum. But after he had bought it with this destination in view for it, he asked the Museum authorities if they would hang it as a loan. This they assented to with alacrity, of course, and after it was very certain that the picture was considered by all whose opinions are valuable a worthy addition to its treasures, the generous owner announced to the trustees of the Museum that the great work would be theirs if they would accept it. Thus has come into the possession of the public forever the huge landscape of Lerolle, which was one of the lions of a recent Salon. It represents a pair of peasant women plodding their way in sabots along the bank of a river. It is the gait of hard-laboring people, but it is a cheerful walk and chat in the freshness of the morning by the river, whose surface shines broadly between the parallel and perpendicular trunks of the trees along its bank. The child perched pick-a-back on the shoulders of one of the women is

evidently chattering and crowing to them, and they are merrily answering his babbling, for their homely, honest faces are on a grin. The light plays brightly around their kerchiefed heads, giving these and their sturdy figures a marvellous realism of relief. Birds dart through the air above the shining water, and thus the picture is gay and cheering, though of absolutely homely sincerity, of literal delineation, and of a cold gray tone without a single varying note for effect. It is as unconventional in composition, with its narrow altitude barred like a grated window by its parallel tree-trunks, as it is simple in motive. It is an honest and healthy piece of work, besides being work of great technical cleverness, and in its honesty and strength must prove a constant delight and refreshment to artists and students.

Harvey Parker's \$100,000 was as complete a surprise to the Museum as the meagre portion he set apart for his widow was to that lady. Her protest and legal right have availed to make a new partition of the principal items of his great property, but it is understood that the \$100,000 bequest to the Museum stands. This was indeed the only public gift. It marks a new departure in the testatory tendencies of American millionaires that is of the highest interest to the friends of art. Heretofore Dives has sought to take a bond of heaven and posterity by dedicating some portion of his gains to religion, to charity, or to education. If any wealthy decedent has heretofore sacrificed to æsthetics, it has been to music. Painting and sculpture are for the first time remembered in Harvey D. Parker's will. Curious inquiry finds no reason for this happy singularity of choice in Mr. Parker's case in his own personal tastes, associations, or convictions. He was not known to care for art or artists. He never spent any money on pictures considered otherwise than as furniture. He never patronized any poor artists, or was proud to be recognized by successful ones. Outside of the circles of political diners-out and well-to-do tradesmen who frequented his banqueting and drinking halls, his only demonstrative friendship with any well-known personage was with Miss Clara Louise Kellogg, and her he probably admired quite as much for her well-kept wealth as for her less well-husbanded voice. His shrewd and practical mind undoubtedly reached its decision to endow the Museum of Fine Arts with his solitary public bequest from considerations not unconnected with the craft of which he was a shining light—a master in his day. What brought people to Boston or led them to stop over a day at his hotel? The sights of the town—the old State House, the Old South, Bunker Hill, the Art Museum—not the hospitals, the colleges, the reform schools, the churches, to which men ordinarily leave their money in this country. In the true thrift of the immortal principle of putting your favors "where they will do the most good" (i.e. to yourself), he sent his posthumous generosity in the direction of the institution which most specially entertains the stranger within the gates and detains the touring bridal pair and the family of the Western plutocrat seeking culture at its source, at the hotels of the city. This to account for the particular direction of his munificence only; let us not fail to honor the impulse of public spirit that dictated a gift of some kind in the first place—the determination to leave his city, the whole people of it that is to say, something of lasting value and use that should serve as a memorial of him. What will they do with it at the Art Museum? They could build the next wing of the building, which they hoped to complete this year, but for which they have not dared to ask the supporters of the Museum in the prevalent poverty of the rich. But it is said to be more likely that they will put the hundred thousand by as a nest-egg for an endowment adequate for the maintenance of the Museum, which is now a dead lift and loss to the finance committee of the trustees, who every year are called on to balance a deficit—sometimes more, sometimes less, but with great regularity a deficit—in the accounts of the institution. After that, and with it the bare existence of the Museum, is provided for, then it will be time enough, say the financiers of the Museum, to talk about a fund for the purchase of some original statues (that Mr. Stillman says we ought to have, as well as plaster casts) and old masters in painting, and a fund for the encouragement by purchases of our own contemporary art.

The productive art of this community has been at a very low stage during the past year. Not even the

"cows from Boston," of which the New York exhibition committees have begun to say they have too many, have been produced with any spirit or in the usual profusion. Hence when a young artist from Providence, Stetson by name, arrived here one day, in the midst of the meanest weather of late winter and of the most dismal disarray of the stock market, with some pictures that had unmistakable purpose, point, and ideality in them, the whole community of connoisseurs was stirred, as is a crowd of schoolboys by a band of music. The rumor of them soon spread; the town came flocking. They stood the test of the highest art—that is, they satisfied the popular enthusiasm for story-telling pictures and excited agonizing admiration among the æsthetes. They had, indeed, something of Vedder's cleverness of subject and a great deal of La Farge's poetry of color. One æsthete remarked that the color was as passionate as Swinburne's verse; others found the significance and suggestiveness of the themes chosen for treatment unutterably precious. In short, the young man went home to Providence, after hanging his pictures with prices like \$50 and \$30 marked upon them, and in a few days awoke famous, with the great guns of a furor over his little things booming in the Boston newspapers. To speak in calmness at this distance from the event, which apparently has not been thought worthy of mention in any New York journal hitherto, young Stetson gave proof of a natural productive genius. He is one of the painters who, if he makes good his promise, will not be content to be eternally repeating his little set of stock subjects—a lot of correct cattle, a choice assortment of elms and meadows or clever arrangements of marsh or of pasture, or regulation models with spinning-wheels, or meaningless bits of color reproducing the studio truck and bric-à-brac. He is an artist who will treat the putting of paint on canvas as a means and not an end, and will have something to say when he paints. Nevertheless he needs to study drawing. His anatomy is generally uncertain and indefinite, and sometimes ridiculous. All the same, he makes it clear what effect he is trying to produce, and oftentimes produces it in a way to take one's breath away with his audacity, his crude strength, and his success withal. Whether he is after an effect of glorious gayety, as in the picture of children in bright red and yellow gowns dancing in a ring upon a vividly green lawn and in the directest pour of golden sunlight, before a marble fountain and wall; or whether he is depicting in strange, pitchy monotone his gruesome and weird night-burial of a suicide, his rich fancy and power manage somehow to "git thar" without much of any drawing, and with none of the well-known touches and tricks of technique.

Speaking of technique, we had with us last winter that wizard of the brush and palette, David Neal. He has been astonishing our native artists—though he is a native himself, only his German life and wife have morally Teutonized him through and through—by painting the portraits of local magnates and their wives hereabouts. More rapid and sure brush-work was doubtless never seen in any age of the art, and the effects he works upon his sitters are really superb when he is inspired by some manly face betraying power and soul, or some womanly figure of grace and queenliness. It is always to exalt and idealize, not to brutalize in a literal collation of poor tale-telling facts that Neal works. The French Zolaism in painting has not yet reached the romantic school of Munich, of which he is at once a pupil and master. That fine German critic, Prof. Pecht (who is at Munich writing a history of German art), confirms my judgment of these Boston portraits of Neal's painted during the past winter. He says (speaking from the photographed copies) that, "taking into consideration the taste in arrangement, the dignity and grace given to the figures, the mobility of expression of the inner man—'soul-painting'—combined with delineation of character, making it evident that they must be perfect likenesses, on the whole, I cannot recall a single artist among us who could compete in portraiture with Neal." This is the opinion of the first authority in Germany, and the consideration it has in that country is plain from the circumstance that Neal is now painting away at the heads of so many notables in Munich that it is doubtful if he returns as soon as expected to execute the commissions he was unable to fill on his recent visit.

GRETA.